

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, Applicant appreciated the Examiner's allowance of claims 6-15.

Claims 1-2 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Elly (U.S. Patent No. 4,928,194), in view of Kimura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,594,110). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Enclosed herewith is a Verified English Translation of Japanese Priority Document No. 2001-144558. A certified copy of this document was filed on September 27, 2001.

The Kimura reference has a Publication Date of March 14, 2002, and a filing date of July 26, 2001. Japanese Priority Document 2001-144558 has a filing date of May 15, 2001. This priority document discloses the subject matter defined in rejected claims 1-2 and 5. Accordingly, the foreign priority dates of the present invention are earlier than the publication and filing dates of the Kimura reference. As the claim for foreign priority has been perfected with the filing of the enclosed Verified Translation of the Priority Document, Applicant respectfully requests that the §103 rejection of claims 1-2 and 5 be withdrawn.

Claims 3-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Elly as modified by Kimura, and further in view of Ogura (JP Patent Heisei No. 6-48590). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection for the reasons recited above the overcome the rejection of independent claim 1. Withdrawal of the §103 rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ogura in view of Voldman (U.S. Patent No. 6,574,078). Claim 16 is cancelled. Accordingly, the rejection is moot.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that this Application is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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